



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1669/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Shire of Victoria Plains

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 1 ON PLAN 225062 (BOLGART 6568)
BOLGART TOWNSITE LOT 153 (Lot No. 153 BOLGART WEST BOLGART 6568)
LOT 127 ON PLAN 158037 (BOLGART 6568)
ROAD RESERVE (BOLGART 6568)
LOT 126 ON PLAN 158037 (BOLGART 6568)
LOT 125 ON PLAN 158037 (House No. 96 FORREST BOLGART 6568)

Local Government Area: Shire Of Victoria Plains
Colloquial name: New road reserve

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.66	14	Mechanical Removal	Road construction or maintenance

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Beard Vegetation Associations 352 - Medium woodland; York Gum (Shepherd et al. 2001, Hopkins et al. 2001).	The vegetation under application is located within a road reserve in the Bolgart townsite, within an extensively cleared agricultural area identified in EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000). The road construction is to provide property owner access for adjacent Lots 125, 126 and 127.	Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery 1994)	The vegetation clearing description is based on information and photographs provided by the applicant (TRIM Ref. DOC15338).
Mattiske Vegetation Complex - Coolakin - Woodland of Eucalyptus wandoo with mixtures of Eucalyptus patens, Eucalyptus marginata subsp. thalassica and Corymbia calophylla on the valley slopes in arid and perarid zones (Mattiske Consulting, 1998).	The vegetation applied to be cleared comprises fourteen mature trees including York Gum and Wandoo with no understorey. The trees to be cleared are within an area of approximately 0.66ha.		

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
The vegetation under application is located within a road reserve within an extensively cleared agricultural area identified in EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000).

The vegetation applied to be cleared comprises fourteen mature trees including York Gum and Wandoo with no understorey. The trees are located within an area of approximately 0.66ha which is completely degraded.

Given the size of the proposed clearing and the degraded condition of the application area the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Reference:
- EPA (2000)
GIS databases:
- Chittering - Goomalling 50cm Orthomosaic - DLI03
- Town Planning Scheme Zones - MFP 8/98
- EPA Position Paper No 2 Agriculture Region - DEP 12/00

(b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna Indigenous to Western Australia.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

The vegetation under application is located within a road reserve within an extensively cleared agricultural area identified in EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000).

The vegetation applied to be cleared comprises fourteen mature trees including York Gum and Wandoo with no understorey. The trees are within an area of approximately 0.66ha which is completely degraded.

No visible signs of nesting have been observed at the site (Shire of Victoria Plains 2007). Furthermore, the vegetation to be cleared is surrounded to the south and east by larger areas of similar vegetation.

Given the scattered nature, the small size, and degraded condition of the proposed clearing as well as areas of remaining remnant vegetation in the 10km local area the vegetation under application is not likely to provide significant habitat for indigenous fauna. Therefore, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Reference:
- Shire of Victoria Plains (2007) (TRIM Ref. DOC15338)
GIS databases:
- Chittering - Goomalling 50cm Orthomosaic - DLI03
- DEC SAC Bio Datasets, Date accessed 01/02/2007

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

The vegetation applied to be cleared comprises of fourteen mature trees including York Gum and Wandoo with no understorey.

There are five known Declared Rare or Priority Flora populations within a 10km radius of the vegetation under application. The closest known population is *Stylidium scabridum* (Priority 4) which is located approximately 7.1kms north west of the vegetation under application. Other known populations within a 10km radius include:

- 1 population of *Hydatella leptogyne* (Rare)
- 1 population of *Eleocharis keigheryi* (Rare)
- 1 population of *Eucalyptus loxophleba* x wandoo (Priority 4)
- 1 population of *Hydrocotyle lemnoides* (Priority 4)

None of the above listed species occur within the same Beard Vegetation Unit (352) or Mattiske Vegetation Complex (Coolakin) as mapped in the area under application.

Given the clearing is for fourteen Wandoo and York Gum trees and the degraded condition of the vegetation the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS databases:
- DEC SAC Bio Datasets, Accessed 27/04/2007
- Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01
- Mattiske Vegetation - CALM 24/3/98

(d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

There are no known occurrences of Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) within a 50km radius of the vegetation under application (the closest being approximately 54kms west of the vegetation under application).

Furthermore, the vegetation under application comprises of fourteen mature trees with no understorey and is completely degraded.

Given the modified and degraded condition of the area and the distance to the closest TEC, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

- Methodology** GIS Databases:
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas - DOE 08/03/05
 - DEC SAC Bio Datasets, Accessed 27/04/2007
 - Chittering - Goomalling 50cm Orthomosaic - DLI03

(e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Comments Proposal is at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application is a component of Beard Vegetation Association 352 (Hopkins et al. 2001) and Mattiske - Coolakin Complex of which 16.6% and 42.9% of Pre-European extent remain respectively (Shepherd et al. 2001). The vegetation under application is also located within the Intensive Land-use Zone (Shepherd et al. 2001) within the area defined in EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000).

The State Government is committed to the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation which includes a target that prevents a clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of that present pre-European settlement (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002, EPA 2000).

	Pre-European	Current extent	Remaining	Conservation***	% In
reserves/CALM	(ha)	(ha)	(%)	status	managed land
IBRA Bioregions					
Avon Wheatbelt*	9,578,995	1,536,296	16.0	Vulnerable	
Shire of Victoria Plains*	255,291	34,787	13.6	Vulnerable	
Vegetation type:					
Beard: 352**	724,296	119,957	16.6	Vulnerable	2.3
Mattiske: Coolakin Complex	1,338,992	573,908	42.9	Depleted	

* (Shepherd et al. 2001)

** (Adapted from: Shepherd et al. 2001)

** (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002)

EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000) states that under the National Heritage Trust Partnership Agreements (current in 1999), all jurisdictions (States) have committed to no clearing of endangered ecological communities. Vegetation within the Avon Wheatbelt, Shire of Victoria Plains and Beard Vegetation Association 352 are well below the State Government's National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation of 30% and classed as vulnerable at 16.0%, 13.6% and 16.6% respectively.

Furthermore, Beard Vegetation Association 352 representation within secure tenure is below the 15% pre-1750 distribution reservation system recommended by JANIS Forests Criteria (1997) at only 2.3%.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is at variance to this Principle, however this impact has been addressed by a condition requiring the proponent to plant 180 trees within Behanging Road Reserve (Reserve 2148).

- Methodology** References:
- Adapted from: Shepherd et al. (2001)
 - Shepherd et al. (2001)
 - Hopkins et al. (2001)
 - Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)
 - EPA (2000)
 - JANIS Forests Criteria (1997)
- GIS databases:
- Mattiske Vegetation - CALM 24/3/98
 - Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01
 - Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia - EA 18/10/00
 - Chittering - Goomalling 50cm Orthomosaic - DLI03

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application is within close proximity to Bolgart Brook (approximately 350m south east of

the application) and two non-perennial minor watercourses nearby (approximately 500m to the north and south of the application).

Topographical contours, aerial imaging and photographs of the site indicate that vegetation under application is from an upland vegetation community and is therefore not growing in, or in association with these watercourses. Therefore, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

- Methodology** Reference:
- Shire of Victoria Plains (2007) (TRIM Ref. DOC15338)
- GIS databases:
- Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04
 - Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02
 - Chittering - Goomalling 50cm Orthomosaic - DLI03
 - Rivers 250K - GA

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

- Comments** **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
- The vegetation under application lies within soil unit Qb29. These soils are associated with a rolling to hilly landscape with some steep slopes. Gneissic rock outcrops are common, with chief soils of hard neutral red soils (Department of Agriculture 2004).

Salinity risk mapping identifies a nil to low risk of salinity within the vegetation under application. Given this, the description of the soil unit and small amount of vegetation to be cleared (fourteen trees within 0.66ha), the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

- Methodology** Reference:
- Department of Agriculture (2004)
- GIS databases:
- Soils, Statewide - DA 11/99
 - Salinity Risk LM 25m - DOLA 00

(h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.

- Comments** **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
- There are four DEC managed lands within a 10km radius of the vegetation under application. The closest reserve is an un-named reserve approximately 6.9kms north west of the vegetation under application.

The vegetation applied to be cleared comprises fourteen mature trees including York Gum and Wandoo with no understorey. The trees are within an area of approximately 0.66ha which is completely degraded.

Given the distance to these reserves, the degraded condition of the application area and the relatively small size of the application the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the environmental values of these reserves.

- Methodology** GIS databases:
- Clearing Regulations - Environmentally Sensitive Areas - DOE 30/5/05
 - CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 1/07/05

(i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.

- Comments** **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
- The vegetation under application does not include any Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA) or PDWSA Protection Zones.

The vegetation under application lies within an area mapped with an average groundwater salinity of 7000-14000 (TDS) mg/L.

Given the scattered nature and amount of vegetation to be cleared (fourteen trees within 0.66ha), the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

- Methodology** GIS databases:
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs) - DOE 07/02/06
 - Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - 22/02/00

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application occurs within an area associated with an annual evaporation rate of approximately 2200mm and an annual rainfall of approximately 500mm.

Given this, the scattered nature of the vegetation and size to be cleared (fourteen trees within 0.66ha), the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS databases:

- Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01
- Evaporation Isopleths - BOM 09/98

Planning Instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

The vegetation under application is located within the area defined in the EPA Position Statement No. 2 (EPA 2000). EPA Position Statement No. 2 states that clearing should not compromise any vegetation type by taking it below the threshold level of 30%. However, where this occurs the EPA expect alternative mechanisms to be put forward to protect biodiversity. Therefore, an offset to mitigate the clearing is recommended.

The offset accepted by the applicant includes the planting of 180 trees to offset the clearing of 14 mature trees. This planting will be undertaken within the Behanging Road Reserve, which has been marked for a Heritage/Eco Park by the Shire of Victoria Plains. The overall project will also incorporate revegetation of under storey and mid storey species, and therefore the offset planting of 180 trees is considered adequate to mitigate the proposed clearing.

The vegetation under application is associated with an Aboriginal Site of Significance (S01351 - Watterning-Bolgart), and is within a Native Title Claim area. The proponent will be advised to liaise with the Department of Indigenous Affairs regarding the Shire's obligations under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972. The proposed clearing is within a road reserve that is vested with the Shire of Victoria Plains. As the proposed clearing is consistent with the purpose of the vesting and the Shire is exercising a statutory power, the granting of a clearing permit constitutes a secondary approval and is not a future act under the Native Title Act 1993.

There is no other RIWI Act Licence or EPA Act Licence that affects the vegetation under application.

The area is zoned 'Roads' in the Shire of Victoria Plains Town Planning Scheme No. 4.

Methodology Reference:

- EPA (2000)
- GIS databases:
- Native Title Claims - DLI 7/11/05
 - Aboriginal Sites of Significance - DIA

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Road construction or maintenance	Mechanical Removal	0.66 14		<p>The clearing application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s51O of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. The clearing as proposed is at variance to Principle (e).</p> <p>The assessing officer recommends that the clearing permit be granted with an offset planting of 45 seedlings of <i>Santalum spicatum</i> (Sandlewood), 45 seedlings of <i>Santalum acuminatum</i> (Quandong), 45 seedlings of <i>Eucalyptus wandoo</i> (Wandoo), and 45 seedlings of <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i> (York Gum) to be completed by October 2008.</p>

5. References

Adapted from: Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R., and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001), Native Vegetation in Western Australia. Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture Western Australia, South Perth. Includes subsequent updates for 2006 from Vegetation Extent dataset ANZWA1050000124.

Department of Agriculture (2004) Soil-landscape mapping, Western Australia Department of Agriculture, Date accessed 01/02/2007.

Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002) Biodiversity Action Planning. Action planning for native biodiversity at multiple scales; catchment bioregional, landscape, local. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria.

EPA (2000) Environmental protection of native vegetation in Western Australia. Clearing of native vegetation, with particular

reference to the agricultural area. Position Statement No. 2. December 2000. Environmental Protection Authority.

FloraBase (2007) Descriptions by the Western Australian Herbarium, Department of Environment and Conservation. Text used with permission (<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/help/copyright>). Accessed on Thursday, 1 February 2007.

Hedde, E. M., Loneragan, O. W., and Havel, J. J. (1980) Vegetation Complexes of the Darling System, Western Australia. In Department of Conservation and Environment, Atlas of Natural Resources, Darling System, Western Australia.

Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Mattiske Consulting (1998) Mapping of vegetation complexes in the South West forest region of Western Australia, CALM.

Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

Shire of Victoria Plains (2007) Site information and photos (TRIM Ref. DOC15338).

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
DAWA	Department of Agriculture
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DoE)
DoE	Department of Environment
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
EPP	Environmental Protection Policy
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission (now DoE)